

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11 and 12 are all the claims pending in the application, all claims being rejected over prior art. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested.

Egawa et al (USP 5,745,694) describes the establishment of a connection over a series of links. In the detailed description, there is no discussion of reserving circuits for particular users, and indeed the detailed description in various places suggests no reservation, e.g., lines 29-50 of column 6 describe a situation where bandwidth has been "reserved" in advance but is not available when the scheduled connection time arrives. In this context, the bandwidth has not really been reserved but has been requested/scheduled.

More importantly, however, while the Background discussion of the patent in several places, e.g., lines 56-58 of column 1 and lines 29-31 of column 2, describes the reservation of a circuit "assigned" to a particular network, it is clear that this is simply describing a situation where a given network is assigned a group of circuits and all calls from the network have to be connected using the assigned circuits. If the assigned circuits are not available, the connection cannot be made.

This is different from the present invention. According to the present invention, "some users of a communication network" are assigned a preferential user attribute. In other words, some users are given preferential access as compared to other users of the same network. Egawa et al does not distinguish between users of a network, but only distinguishes between networks.

It is believed that the claims already clearly make the distinction, but the claims have been amended to make this even more clear.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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